

LIVING FAITH

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 10, 2023



THE WORD OF GOD FOR TODAY: MARK 1: 1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the Prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight'," John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole country side and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."



REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

During this past week, we celebrated the feast of St Nicholas, a 4th century bishop. There was a tradition in Germany and Poland for children to dress up like bishops on December 6 and go out to beg donations for the poor. That taught the children 1) that we all have to take care of one another, 2) that people who are well off should be generous, and 3) that bishops and other leaders should always remember the poor and help them.

John the Baptist, the first person we meet in the Gospel of Mark, taught similar lessons. The way he dressed and the food he ate were a kind of protest. He had given up the security and convenience of his ordinary life in order to wake people up. John's lifestyle and preaching did shake people up and nudged them to something greater. He awakened people to see that they were living in a spiritual desert, and challenged them to change their ways.

Mark, the Gospel-writer, tells us that John the Baptist was sent by God. John was convinced that his people's lifestyle was not worthy of God's people – and he spoke up. God is still sending prophets to awaken us and help us to see.



TALKING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- Can you think of who some of those hidden prophets in our time and place might be?
- What do you think those modern-day prophets might say to us about our lifestyle or the way we treat one another?
- John said, "There is one coming after me who is more powerful than I am" and "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."
 - Who is the one coming after John? Where and how can we find out about him?
 - What do you think "baptize with the Holy Spirit" might mean?

A Messenger Sent from God

It is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way."
Mark 1:2 (NIV)

Based on Mark 1:1-8 (NIV)



V J P O I V S T C O N F E S S
 E A A M C L H M P R O P H E T
 Z K T G A G N R M X J R G C C
 S W H D I A L T E L T E F J H
 J X N A D R R C S O R A S V C
 R A T R S E Q H S C E C A U E
 S S O U S V J O E U P H P M S
 B J C E C O B N N S E I I T N
 U I D A Z L A E G T N N K C K
 J B T K L Z P Y E S T G Q H C
 O H Z E A L T Y R V A K F R A
 H V O I C E I Y E W N I I I N
 N S L L B T Z N T L C L S S R
 L I N B H K E A G V E H P T B
 C N G O S P E L W R I V E R R

LOCUSTS	PATH	GOSPEL	VOICE	PROPHET
CALLING	HONEY	STRAIGHT	CHRIST	JOHN
REPENTANCE	PREACHING	RIVER	JESUS	DESERT
JORDAN	SANDALS	BAPTIZE	MESSENGER	CONFESS

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Watch a short video about Advent from Busted Halo [here](#).

Once again, the CCCB has produced an Advent Video reflection series called Journey through Advent. This year's presenter is Most Rev. Bishop Jon Hansen, CSsR, Bishop of Mackenzie-Fort Smith. The reflection for the Second Sunday of Advent can be viewed [here](#).

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THE CHURCH TEACHES

Advent Symbols

AND WHAT THEY MEAN

Advent is a time of **LONGING AND WAITING** for the Lord to come. Premature decoration of the church building and early use of Christmas songs at liturgy compromise the spirit of expectation.



The evergreen circle and four candles of the **ADVENT WREATH** reflect the passage of the Advent season. It is often blessed at the beginning of Mass on the first Sunday of Advent.



VIOLET VESTMENTS reflect longing and anticipation, not penance. **Rose vestments** may be used on the third (Gaudete) Sunday to signal the mid-point of the season.

Although not a season of penance, **RECONCILIATION** finds a special place in Advent as we prepare for Christmas and seek to approach Jesus' coming with hearts free of sin and filled with praise.

"If you have something dark in your soul, ask the Lord for forgiveness. Christmas is a great opportunity to cleanse the soul!"

POPE FRANCIS

The **GLORY TO GOD** is not sung and the organ and other musical instruments are used in moderation to allow us to anticipate the full joy of December 25th, when they are taken up again. Flowers may be used, but in moderation so as to leave a sense of abundance for the Nativity.



ALLELUIA continues to be sung in the Gospel Acclamation and in other songs. This is the clearest indication that Advent is a season of expectation, not penance.



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#AdventTO



Joy

Rejoice in the Lord always.
I shall say it again: rejoice!
Philippians 4:4

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THE SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

PEACE



Every time we pray the Our Father at Mass, the priest continues with a prayer that concludes with the words: "protect us from all anxiety as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ." Our Christian belief promises that Jesus Christ will come again in glory at the end of time. Our lives should be marked by peace and hope, not fear, as we wait for the Lord's return.

Jesus came to bring peace, a peace that can only come from Him. Jesus also calls us to be people of peace in our world—in our families, in the places we live, in our schools and workplaces, in our communities and in our world.

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE DECEMBER 12

Patron of First Nations and Indigenous North Americans.



PONDER AND DISCUSS

- Where in your life do you need the peace that only God can bring?
- How does your family need to experience peace?
- How does our world need to experience peace?

